suggestions/comments were invited. After considering the responses received, a national consultation was conducted on 18th May, 2007. A final review was organized in the Ministry in September, 2007. The general consensus that has emerged from the wide range of consultations is that the provisions of the Transplantation of Human Organs Act and Rules need to be made more stringent to deter commercial transactions in organ transplantation. In the assessment of this Ministry, most of this can be achieved by making suitable amendments in the Rules framed under the Act. It has also been felt that donation of organs needs to be popularized and encouraged through a National Organ Transplant Programme.

Crop diversion to produce bio-fuels in the country

*27. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that food prices are expected to remain high over the next decade, partly due to demand for bio-fuels as cropping pattern changes in countries like US or perennial factors like massive scale floods in major parts of India damaging extensively standing crops;

(b) if so, whether RBI has apprehended adverse impact on wheat and edible oil prices as a consequential effect; and

(c) what long-term measures, in co-ordination with Ministries of Energy and Petroleum and National Gas, etc. are proposed to be taken so that such a situation of crop diversion to produce bio-fuels could be avoided?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) The Reserve Bank of India in their Mid-Term Review of Annual Policy Statement for 2007-08 (October, 2007) observed that food prices have continued to rule at historically high levels with no immediate relief from improvement in global supply conditions. The increase in prices has been driven by higher energy and fertilizer prices;low level of inventories; shortfall in certain crops mainly caused by weather related factors such as the ongoing drought in Australia; strong increases in the demand for crops particularly in growing economies of Asia and Latin America which are enabling their large population to spend more on foods; and change in cropping pattern in response to the US Governments incentives that are encouraging businesses to turn corn and soybeans into motor fuel. The price of corn, the main feedstock for ethanol production in the US, rose at the beginning of the year to ten-year highs. As this encouraged US farmer to increase their corn production, they decreased the supply of other agricultural products, with a subsequent upward impact on the prices of these products in world markets. Consequently, consumer price inflation has hardened in a number of countries, with food importers being most adversely affected.

(b) The Reserve Bank of India in their Annual Report 2006-07 mentioned that the higher international prices coupled with diversion of acreage from oilseeds towards coarse cereals, especially maize as bio-fuel feedstock, could further exacerbate prices of edible oils. Further, the latest assessment of United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) mentioned that wheat apart from oilseeds is reportedly, also being diverted for bio-fuels.

(c) The country has embarked on a path of bio-fuel development by utilizing the enormous wasteland resources. Based on the recommendations of a Committee on Bio-Fuels constituted by Planning Commission, a National Mission on Bio-diesel with a special emphasis on plantation of jatropha has been envisaged by Ministry of Rural Development. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has formulated a draft National Policy on Bio-fuels which focuses on energy security through sustainable production, conservation and application of bio-fuels (Bio-diesel

bio-ethanol and other bio-fuels). The draft National Policy on Bio-Fuels has been referred to a Group of Ministers (GoM).

Increase in prices of milk and its products

*28. SHRI RAJ NATH SINGH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) what are the reasons for increase in the prices of milk and milk products day-by-day;

(b) whether Government have any plan to control the prices of these items which are commonly used items; and

(c) whether there is any plan to decrease the prices of milk and milk products?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) to (c) Prices of milk and milk products are increased by the producers/manufacturers as and when there is increase in production costs. Government regularly reviews the availability of milk and milk products in the country.

The prices of milk and milk products are fixed by the producers/manufacturers. However, the Government constantly monitors the price of milk and milk products.

Schemes for agricultural productivity

*29. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister's announcement that the farm sector programme will be implemented and is working on a new Rs. 25,000 crore farm sector programme to be implemented by States for increasing agricultural production and productivity;

(b) if so, whether details of the schemes have been finalized and announced;

(c) if so, what are the details of the same; and

(d) whether the Planning Commission is also working with his Ministry for implementing a new additional central assistance scheme to be provided to the States for implementing the farm sector programme?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir. The Government has formulated an Additional Central Assistance (ACA) Scheme, namely, the "Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)" with an envisaged allocation of Rs. 25,000 crore during the XIth Five Year Plan.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The broad objectives of RKVY are, *inter-alia*, to: (i) incentivize the States so as to increase public investment in agriculture and allied sectors; (ii) achieve the goal of reducing the yield gaps in important crops through focused intervention; (iii) maximize returns to the farmers in agriculture and allied sectors; and (iv) bring about quantifiable changes in the production and productivity of various components of agriculture and allied sectors by addressing them in a holistic manner.